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ABSTRACT

Miami-Dade Community College's (MDCC's) Emphasis on Excellence program is described in this report as a comprehensive effort initiated in January 1979 to encourage high-ability students and to provide the community with a greater scope of educational and cultural opportunities. After introductory material outlining specific program objectives, the report describes seven of its components: (1) Scholar's Grants in the form of matriculation fee waivers for area high school graduates who ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class: (2) Academic Achievement Grants, which are awarded annually to 100 outstanding MDCC students: (3) the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series, which provides students and faculty with an opportunity to hear guest lecturers with international reputations in their fields: (4) the Creative Focus program, which provides students, the community, and area high schools with access to the performing arts through theater productions and classes: (5) the Governor's Summer School for the Gifted and Talented, during which MDCC faculty provide college-level instruction to the area's top high school students: (6) efforts to internationalize the general education and humanities curricula in response to the multi-national profile of the student body: and (7) an Honors Program for the most highly motivated students. For each component, the report examines goals, operations, and accomplishments to date. (JP)

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EMPHASIS ON EXCELLENCE

Miami-Dade Community College, Florida

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EMPHASIS ON EXCELLENCE

In early January 1979, Miami-Dade Community College developed and began implementation of the Emphasis on Excellence Program to offer challenging educational experiences to superior students. Although this goal had always been in evidence at the College through its broad scope of academic offerings, a combination of new and exciting factors now contributed to the development of a comprehensive program to meet the needs of the high-ability student.

Motivation

1. To encourage bright young men and women to remain in the South Florida area;
2. To foster the development of a high-motivated group of students who would have a positive effect on the student population as a whole;
3. To create new academic challenges for the faculty;
4. To address the continuing need for high-quality programs during the first two years of college; and
5. To provide an even greater scope of educational and cultural opportunities for the community.

With motivation and academic excellence as the key words, the Emphasis on Excellence Program took shape. Essential components were the scholarship grants, the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series, the honors curriculum, the invitational seminars, the opportunities for program acceleration, and the cultural series and special events. Since the inception of this program, relationships with the public and private secondary schools have been noticeably strengthened. It is rewarding for local schools to see their students afforded new and challenging opportunities. This closer cooperation has now seen fruition in the Governor's Summer School for the Gifted and Talented, a program designed to provide an opportunity for senior high school gifted and talented students to participate in and utilize the resources of Miami-Dade Community College.

Faculty participation and support were considered essential for both the planning and implementation process. As a result, faculty members were invited in the initial planning stages through appointments to the newly-created Emphasis on Excellence Committee. In addition, faculty members were selected to serve as Coordinators of Excellence at Miami-Dade's four campuses.

Scholar's Grant

Recognition for outstanding performance in high school was given through

a waiver of matriculation fees to Dade County high school graduates who ranked in the top ten percent of their graduating class. This waiver represents a scholarship of approximately $1,000 to students who earn an associate degree at Miami-Dade. These scholar students were the first to be accepted at Miami-Dade Community College as part of the Emphasis on Excellence Program. A total of 501 students registered during the Fall Term 1979-1980; this is 31.5% of the top ten percent graduates from Dade County public high schools.

The majority of Scholar's Grant students are females and are enrolled in Associate in Arts programs. While most Scholar's Grant students are 1979 high school graduates, more than 25% previously earned some credit at Miami-Dade as early enrollees, dual enrollees, or credit by examination students.

At the end of the Fall Term, the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the scholar students fell into the following categories:

3.5 or above	207	41%
3.2 or above	315	63%
3.0 or above	375	75%
2.5 or above	440	88%
below 2.5	61	12%

Of those who finished the Fall Term, thirteen students came under an academic warning category of the Standards of Academic Progress and were no longer eligible to register as a grant recipient for subsequent terms. Scholar's Grant recipients are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA for their first year at Miami-Dade.

At the beginning of the Winter Term 1980, thirty-one new Scholar's Grant recipients were added to the program. These students are also being surveyed and closely followed throughout their initial term.

The general impression held by the Coordinators of Excellence at the different campuses regarding these Scholar's Grants is that the students are enthusiastic about the academic programs available, the support services provided, and the financial aid offered.

The Scholar's Grant program has had a strong positive affect on present high school students, counselors, faculty, and principals. This is evidenced by the fact that over 125 applications were received in the first two weeks after invitations to apply were issued to members of the 1980 graduating class. The College estimates that the number of recipients for next year will at least equal the 1979-1980 total. High school counselors are taking an active role in information dissemination about the program and have also made valuable

recommendations regarding the selection process. The Department of Institutional Research at Miami-Dade Community College will continue to monitor the Scholar's Grant program in an ongoing evaluation process which will assist with future program planning and development.

Academic Achievement Grants

Recognition for outstanding performance during the freshman year at Miami-Dade was given to 100 continuing students through a waiver of matriculation fees for their sophomore year. Almost half of these Achievement Grant recipients were graduates of Dade County public high schools, and a total of sixty percent originate from Florida high schools. The majority of these individuals are enrolled in Associate in Arts programs.

The academic progress of Achievement Grant recipients during the Fall Term 1979-1980 was outstanding, with all but two students maintaining cumulative grade point averages of 3.5 or higher. Of the 101 recipients of the Achievement Grant, 83 registered for the Winter Term, 53 with 12 credit hours or more. Ten of the Achievement Grant recipients graduated as of the end of the Fall Term. The majority of these individuals are females, and a wide range of ages is represented.

Distinguished Visiting Professor Series

Miami-Dade Community College's series of lectures in the arts, sciences, law, economics, and other disciplines entitled Distinguished Visiting Professor Series, has been instituted to provide our students and faculty, selected guests from other colleges, universities and high schools, and the community, with the opportunity to listen to persons who have gained international reputations in their fields.

The idea of bringing outside lecturers with international reputations to Miami-Dade was initially proposed as part of the total Emphasis on Excellence Program which was approved by the District Board of Trustees. The impetus behind the proposal stemmed from a feeling shared by a large number of College administrators and faculty that the College had been successful in directing resources and toward developing support systems for numbers of students who were not ready for college-level course work, but who had been given the opportunity to attend college and attempt preparation for a career through the College's open door policy, and that now that these support systems, special programs, laboratories, etc., were operating successfully, the College now had the time to give equal support toward outstanding and highly-

academic students. Thus, the birth of the Emphasis on Excellence Program and as part of that, the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series. The other systems, etc., will, of course, continue to remain an integral part of the College program.

To be sure, the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series is open to all students, giving each student at the College the opportunity to hear and be exposed to lecturers who heretofore have only been names in textbooks. A major aim of the series is to inspire students to excel in their studies and encourage their quest of knowledge. In this goal, the series has already succeeded admirably. Student response to the series has been enthusiastic, and it has not been only the scholastic achievers who have responded with excitement and renewed academic fervor, but all students who have taken advantage of the opportunity to attend the lectures. The community has also been visible in its support for the program through attendance at the lectures, requests for lectures to specific community groups, and by welcoming the lecturers to their homes.

To initiate the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series, the District Board of Trustees authorized an invitation to Dr. Edward Teller, father of the atom bomb, and one of the most outstanding and well-known nuclear physicists of our time. Dr. Teller accepted the invitation and came to the College in March of 1979 where he proved to be a stimulating and indefatigable presenter. He loved the students and obviously relished the opportunity to meet with them. His talks fired their imagination and his charming manner captured their hearts. His visit was a real success by everyone's measure. The second and last lecturer in the first year of the series was Dr. Luis Siles Salinas, former president of Bolivia and chairman of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. To organize Dr. Teller's and Dr. Salinas' visits, faculty committees with representatives from each campus were formed to determine the topics for presentation and to coordinate all the arrangements pertinent to the Distinguished Visiting Professors' visits.

As with all new ventures, the faculty committees recognized that for future presentations certain questions needed to be answered and an organizational structure designed. A College-wide committee with representatives from each campus was formed to address these and other points. In addition to soliciting names of possible lecturers from faculty and administration, the committee addressed such issues as awarding credit for participation in a visiting professor's lecture series. In the case of Dr. Teller's

lectures, all who attended had the opportunity to earn credit. The College-wide committee determined that the faculty committee responsible for a particular Distinguished Visiting Professor should decide whether or not to offer credit. The opportunity to earn credit would depend upon the lecture format (e.g., small group or large group), the amount of time involved for each lecture, and the opportunity for student interaction with the presenter.

The College-wide committee also recognized that not every Distinguished Visiting Professor would have the almost universal attraction of Dr. Teller, but that it was important to bring lecturers to the College who would address the interests of special groups of students. The 1979-1980 schedule was a good blend of general and special interest topics and speakers.

To arrange the 1979-1980 series of lectures, the committee solicited suggestions of possible lecturers from all faculty and administrators and from the recommendations drew up a list of visiting professors to be contacted. Because so much interest was generated in the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series even after possible visiting professors had been invited and the year's program planned, additional recommendations continued to come to the committee from faculty groups. The committee was delighted with the enthusiastic response, but felt a need to formalize further the organization and structure of the committee. Guidelines for soliciting and accepting suggestions for possible lecturers were developed and adopted by the committee. (Complete guidelines attached). These new guidelines were sent to all faculty along with a request for names to be considered for the 1980-1981 series. This new procedure has worked extremely well and provisions have been made to invite speakers who suddenly become available as a bonus but not to be identified by the title Distinguished Visiting Professor.

In order to make the visiting professors available to the greatest number of students, the committee had recommended and implemented several different formats and schedules. The first format was to have the lecturer make presentations on several campuses. The second format had a single campus hosting a series of lectures by a visiting professor with students from other campuses brought to the host campus to hear the lecture. The committee will reevaluate these scheduling formats in light of the increased costs for gasoline and transportation, the number of presenters for each program, and the special interest shown by the campuses in an individual program.

The 1979-1980 series began in November of 1979 with a series of presentations entitled "The Dangers of Growing Too Fast: Problems in Contemporary

and Regional Development." These presentations were made by a group of the foremost architects and planners in the country - Robert Geddes, Edward Logue, Jaquelin Robertson, and Paolo Soleri. The response to these presentations was overwhelming. Not only did many of our students attend, but the local architectural community also attended in large numbers. Additionally, a large local architectural firm helped defray the cost of the presentations and hosted a reception in honor of the speakers.

The next lecturer in the 1979-1980 series was Dr. Lawrence Krause, noted economist and currently Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution. The Distinguished Visiting Professor Series gathered additional community support when Dr. Krause was asked to speak at the Tiger Bay Luncheon Club whose members are political and business leaders in Miami. The Club invites distinguished presenters each week to speak on a wide range of topics. This kind of community support is an indication of how this program has grown and the value placed on the opportunities available to our students and the community at large.

The 1979-1980 series also included presentations by noted art critic and historian, Dore Ashton, whose topics dealt with "A View of Modern Art," presentations by Dr. Alvin Poussaint, Associate Dean of Students of the Harvard Medical School, who addressed the topics of "Race and Mental Health," and "Student Assessment," and presentations by premier American playwright, Edward Albee. Albee's lectures concluded with an address to the audience after Miami-Dade students performed his play "A Delicate Balance" at Gusman Cultural Center. A bonus visit provided by the Distinguished Visiting Professor Series, but not entitled a Distinguished Visiting Professor, was Alfred Eisenstaedt, the father of photojournalism.

Most of the visiting speakers gave special presentations by invitation only to smaller groups of students who are taking courses in the lecturer's field. They also present lectures on more general topics in their field which are open to all students and the public. To enable anyone unable to attend the lectures to hear what was said, all of the lectures presented have been video taped. Some of the video-taped presentations will be used on the College's new cable television channel. Additionally, all the Distinguished Visiting Professors have taped appearances for the weekly television show, "Community College Review."

The Distinguished Visiting Professor Series started spectacularly with Dr. Teller and has now gathered momentum and increased support from the

faculty, students, administration, and community. It is a program of which the College is justly proud, and we look forward to continuing to serve the College and the community by providing quality presentations by outstanding people.

Creative Focus

Special cultural events of interest to all students were coordinated through a new College program known as Creative Focus. Each campus participated in a joint effort to provide learning experiences through art, music, theatre, and public forums scheduled at Gusman Cultural Center in downtown Miami.

Creative Focus serves as the developmental, experimental, and educational vehicle for the performing arts at Miami-Dade Community College. Its primary role is that of advocacy of the arts through professional and College productions, classes, and community collaborations. It seeks to further enrich the cultural experience of the College's students and county residents by offering another avenue of quality entertainment in a rapidly growing downtown area.

Nationally and internationally known performers are part of the Creative Focus program, in addition to Miami-Dade's faculty and student productions. Recitals, dance, comedy, and drama are part of the diverse cultural programs scheduled at Gusman Cultural Center. Through Creative Focus, Arthur Honegger's "King David," featuring William Warfield and the Florida Philarmonic, was presented this winter and received critical acclaim. Also presented were the following student productions: the Pen Players in "Something's Afoot"; the Caravan Players in "Mandragola"; and the Prometeo production of "El Otro" in Spanish. In addition, Gusman is utilized as a site for public forum; such a forum was held in September 1979 on SALT II.

Creative Focus also includes presentations from the Lunchtime Lively Arts Series. The series is known throughout Dade County for presenting high-quality professional performances. (See attached history)

In addition to meeting the needs of its students and community, Creative Focus acts as a supplement to the Fine Arts courses offered by the Dade County Public Schools. High school students and faculty are provided open admissions to performances. Development and support of special projects designed for the talented high school students are integrated into the plan.

In summary, Creative Focus was devised to be an active artistic forum at Gusman Cultural Center whose quality productions, projects, and community outreach provide an environment of learning and enjoyment.

Governor's Summer School for the Gifted and Talented

Another program which will be implemented in the summer of 1980 is the Governor's Summer School for high school students. This program is a cooperative effort between Dade County Public Schools and Miami-Dade Community College. For six weeks, from June 16th through July 24th, intense study opportunities will be offered in the areas of television, math-physics, drama, music, journalism, creative writing, and computer science. Each applicant is to compete for selection in only one area. Students competing must be presently in their tenth or eleventh grade.

The program is designed to provide high-quality college-level instruction with a blend of theory and "hands on" experiences utilizing modern equipment and facilities. Miami-Dade faculty with recognized expertise in the areas have developed the curriculum and will conduct the lecture/seminars and workshops. The summer program will culminate at Gusman Cultural Center with a presentation showcasing the progress and products of each student in the Governor's summer school. The entire expense for instruction, equipment, and the Gusman production is being provided by Miami-Dade Community College and the State of Florida. It is hoped that with the experience gained during this summer program, the Governor's Summer School for the Gifted and Talented will further develop and will become a permanent component of the College's emphasis on excellence.

Global Perspectives in the Undergraduate General Education Curriculum

The ever-present and fundamental question of how persons of differing ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds live together harmoniously has a much greater scope and impact when dealing with the global concern of nations as opposed to the parochial concern of one nation and its inhabitants.

Before the advent of the air age, America was virtually an island, geographically isolated from the rest of the world by two mighty oceans. Some sociologists have suggested that physical insularity invariably leads to intellectual insularity; this was definitely the pattern of development in the United States prior to World War I, and to some extent remains true today. Intellectual insularity, in turn, gives rise to parochial concerns which, in the United States, have been reflected in such diverse ways as opposing full commitment to the United Nations and the National Origins Quota Act of 1923

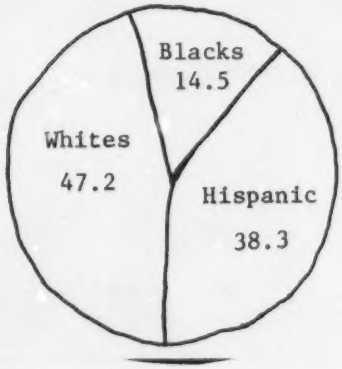
(not repealed until 1965).

In the past two decades, Dade County, Florida, has undergone a transformation in terms of its ethnic composition. This change is being reflected in every aspect of community life. The hub city of Miami has become the first large city in America to host an elected city government that is primarily Hispanic.

Figure 1 represents an estimate of the 1980 population in Dade County, Florida. Data have been provided by the Dade County Planning Department Research Division. Current and projected population figures include a wide distribution of nationalities: Cuba, Colombia, Haiti, Vietnam, Russia, Greece, Jamaica, the Bahamas, etc.

Figure 1

ESTIMATED 1980 POPULATION - DADE



Whites		760,000
Blacks		233,000
Hispanic		617,000
	Total	1,610,000

SOURCES: (1) Dade County Planning Department Research Division, in cooperation with the Community Analysis Division

(2) Office of Institutional Research, Miami-Dade Community College

Miami-Dade Community College currently has the largest foreign-student enrollment in the country. Miami-Dade wishes to become a prime mover in the directions leading to internationalization of the curriculum in order to change the direction of students toward enlightened participation in a global

community. Current statistics indicate that: (1) less than one percent of the college-age group in the United States is enrolled in any courses which specifically feature international issues or areas; (2) fewer than one in ten students enroll in a foreign language course today; (3) only fifty-three percent of institutions of higher education require a foreign language for admission or graduation; and (4) fewer than five percent of the teachers trained today have any exposure to international, comparative, area studies or other intercultural courses in their work for certification.[1]

At Miami-Dade Community College the academic planning for the general education program has proceeded during the past four years and at present five first-year courses are ready to be written. The internationalizing of the general education core courses had to begin at this point if it was ever to be incorporated into the general academic program of the College. Other additional factors were considered in the planning stages.

Miami-Dade student population is multi-national and therefore reflective of international concerns; the teaching staff has expertise in planning for implementation of the general education courses; ancillary services are available to produce maximum program efficiency.

Miami-Dade has initiated a long-range plan to internationalize the general education curriculum with the planned restructuring of general education as a foundation, using nationally-known consultants and Miami-Dade faculty expertise.

The objectives of the proposed two-year project are:

1. To effect the internationalization of the Social Sciences in the general education program at Miami-Dade Community College.
   a. To research existing literature applicable to Social Science and general education programs which addresses areas of global problems.
   b. To develop modules of instruction and materials for use by faculty and students.
   c. To provide a framework for studying global perspectives through the use of these modules.
   d. To develop assessment materials for both students and teachers which will measure content and attitudinal changes.

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[1] Council for Interinstitutional Leadership, Acquainter Newsletter, October-November 1979 issue, p. 1.

2. To effect the internationalizing of the Humanities in the general education program at Miami-Dade Community College so that students will know and appreciate major accomplishments of various cultures and will evaluate their impact on contemporary society.
   a. To research existing literature applicable to the Humanities and general education programs which addresses areas of global problems.
   b. To develop modules of instruction and materials for use by faculty and students.
   c. To provide a framework for studying global perspectives through the use of these modules.
   d. To develop assessment materials for both students and teachers which will measure content and attitudinal changes.

Since Miami-Dade opened in 1960, it has developed a reputation of an effective forward-looking institution. The College has worked hard over the years to maintain the quality of its program and to be ahead with new practices in education. It is time for Miami-Dade to take a leadership role in the educational community towards the internationalizing of the curriculum through the project previous described.

Honors Program

As C. Grey Austin, Honors Director at Ohio State University, aptly stated, "...the specific objectives of an honors program are:

1. To identify students whose ability and motivation are so high that their academic needs would not be adequately met by existing programs.
2. To provide academic opportunities of such caliber that the students thus identified are challenged to perform at the highest level of excellence of which they are capable and through which they may become independent learners.
3. To establish an environment that will encourage the aspirations and achievements of these students and foster within them dignity, self-esteem, and a sense of their potential.
4. To derive benefits from the program for the wider academic community such as focusing attention on quality education and a concept of excellence, giving faculty members the psychic reward that derives from working with gifted students, and attracting to the campus scholars and speakers who would not otherwise be there."

The Honors Program at Miami-Dade Community College fulfills each of these objectives in an attempt to meet the educational needs of its ablest and most highly-motivated students. Honors students are identified through the county-wide top ten percent Scholar's Grant Program and an on-campus search for students already performing at honors quality on the college level.

Once identified, these students are judiciously advised into one or more of the many honors courses offered on the campuses. Students may qualify for the honors program by 1) outstanding performance on the high school level: 2) high scores in one or more areas of the entrance assessment test; 3) maintenance of a 3.5 grade point average in college-level work; or 4) exceptional demonstrated ability in one academic or talent area. Honors modules have also been developed allowing a student registered for a non-honors course to receive honors credit by completing additional, more advanced work approved by the Honors Committee.

Honors courses offered include English Composition (2), Social Science (2), Humanities (2), Chemistry and Chemistry lab (2), Economics (2), Accounting (2), Physics with Calculus and lab, Business Administration, Advanced Public Speaking, Health Maintenance, and Statistics for Behavioral Studies. Honors modules are available in Psychology, Radio and Television (3), Data Processing, and Philosophy.

The faculty team for the Honors Program has been carefully selected on the basis of outstanding instructional skills, demonstrated success in publication or advancement of their field, and an ardent enthusiasm for the development of honors students. The Honors Committee has carefully examined the course packages for each honors offering to ensure that every honors course provides not only additional but also significantly advanced work in the field.

Special services provided for Honors students include extended library privileges, off-campus excursions, including both educational and recreational trips; on-campus workshops to develop leadership skills; scholarship hunts for university transfer; and distinguished guest lecturers and performers. Efforts for the continued development of the Honors Program include a mentor system whereby honors students may receive ongoing career advisement and support from a professor in their chosen field.

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